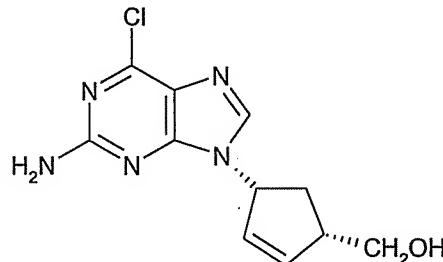


Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

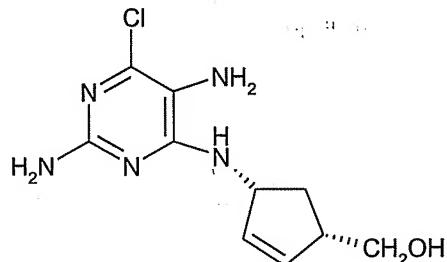
What is claimed is:

1. (Currently amended) A process for preparing a chloropurine compound of formula (I)



(I)

or a derivative thereof, which comprises ring closure of a compound of formula (VII) or a derivative thereof



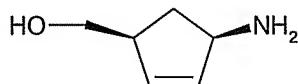
(VII)

in the presence of a catalytic amount of acid and at least one equivalent of a formate derivative trialkylorthoformate.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the acid is sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, or an alkyl or arylsulfonic acid.
3. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the acid is present in an amount of from 0.05 to 0.1 equivalents by mole based on an amount of the compound of formula (VII).
4. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the formate derivative trialkylorthoformate is triethylorthoformate.

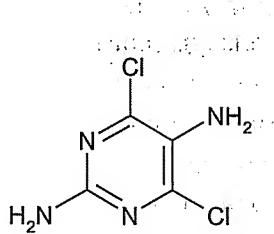
5. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the ~~formate derivative trialkylorthoformate~~ is present in an amount of 1 to 1.5 equivalents by mole based on the amount of the compound of formula (VII).

6. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the compound of formula (VII) or a derivative thereof is prepared by condensing an amino alcohol of formula (IV) or a derivative thereof



(IV)

with a compound of formula (VIII) or a derivative thereof



(VIII)

in the presence of a base.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 6 wherein the condensation reaction is carried out in n-butanol in the presence of sodium bicarbonate.

8. (Original) A process according to claim 6 wherein the condensation reaction is carried out in n-butanol in the presence of anhydrous potassium carbonate.

9. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the chloropurine compound of formula (I) or a derivative thereof prepared by the ring closure reaction is converted *in situ* to abacavir or a derivative thereof.

10. Cancelled